

CHRIST In The Psalms

by

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*All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . .
in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44)*

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The Twenty-Second Psalm

The Good Shepherd giving His life for His Sheep.

Psalms 22

1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?
2. O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.
3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
4. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
5. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.
6. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
7. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
8. He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.
9. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.
10. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.
11. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.
12. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
13. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.
14. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
15. My strength is dried up like a potsherden; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou

hast brought me into the dust of death.

16. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19. But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

21. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

29. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

The Twenty-Second Psalm

Psalms 22, 23, and 24 should be considered together, for they are all Shepherd Psalms. In the New Testament our LORD is presented as a Shepherd in three ways. In John 10 He is the Good Shepherd, giving His life for the sheep (John 10:11). In Hebrews 13:20 He is the Great Shepherd, "**brought again from the dead . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant,**" who is now in resurrection power and glory caring for His flock. In I Peter 5:4 He is the Chief Shepherd who will one day appear to reward His undershepherds and take immediate charge of His sheep.

All of these relationships are set forth in order in our three Shepherd Psalms. In Psalm 22 the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. In Psalm 23 the Great Shepherd is leading His sheep and caring for them. In Psalm 24 He is the King of glory, in His appearing at the end of the age.

A.J. Gordon used to say that Psalm 23 is a suspension bridge, leading from the sufferings of CHRIST in Psalm 22 to the glories that shall follow, described in Psalm 24.

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of

Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Pet. 1:11-12).

Psalm 22 has been called "*The Psalm of Sobs.*" It is a picture of our LORD's crucifixion, written a thousand years before the event. We shall find as we go on with this study that this Psalm is frequently referred to in the New Testament, and that it is unmistakably applied to CHRIST.

HUMAN SIN AND DIVINE HOLINESS

The Psalm opens with one of the seven words from the Cross:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1).

In Matthew 27:46 we read that "**about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?.**"

In the consideration of these words, the question arises as to just why GOD did forsake His Son in that awful hour on the cross. The cry goes on: "**why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent**" (Psalm 22:1-2).

The answer to this question may be found in the words of verses 3 to 6:

"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Psalm 22:3-6).

The holiness of GOD forbade Him to hear the cry of the Sufferer on the Cross. Though that Sufferer was His own Son, and though the Son was doing the will of GOD in His suffering, yet the holy GOD could not look upon His own LAMB because that LAMB was there *as a sin offering*, and upon Him was laid the crushing burden of the sin of the world. The holy GOD cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance:

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13)

and on the Cross the Son of GOD was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that "**we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (II Corinthians 5:21).

This is a point that should be understood clearly. JESUS of Nazareth hung on the Cross not as the Son of GOD, though of course He was the Son of GOD, and is. He hung there, however, as the embodiment of the world's sin. He hung there as "**a worm, and no man.**" It was from this embodiment of sin that the holy GOD turned away.

In that moment the problem of Bildad the Shuhite was being solved, as set forth in Job 25:4-6:

"How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" (Job 25:4-6).

The answer to Bildad's question is that man is justified with GOD through the transaction of Calvary, where the LAMB of GOD shed His precious blood in order to make it possible for the righteous GOD to remain righteous while justifying the believing sinner. It is the marvel of the Gospel that GOD found a way by which "**he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**" (Romans 3:26).

The sacrifice of Calvary does not appeal to the natural man.

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him" (Psalm 22:7-8).

In Matthew's account of the crucifixion we read that:

"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt. 27:39-44).

THE STORY OF CALVARY ONE THOUSAND YEARS IN ADVANCE

In verse 9 and 10 the Sufferer rolls Himself upon the LORD in His agony, and in verses 11 to 13 cries unto Him out of the turmoil surrounding Him on the Cross.

"But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly" (Psalm 22:9-10).

And then in verses 14 and 15 He gives expression to His physical sufferings.

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Psalm 22:14-15).

All this, as Dr. Scofield points out, "is a graphic picture of death by crucifixion. The bones (of the hands, arms, shoulders, and pelvis) out of joint (v. 14); the profuse perspiration caused by intense suffering (v. 14); the action of the heart affected (v. 14); strength exhausted, and extreme thirst (v. 15); the hands and feet pierced (v. 16); partial nudity with the hurt to modesty (v. 17), are all incidental to that mode of death.

The accompanying circumstances are precisely those fulfilled in the crucifixion of CHRIST.

The desolate cry of verse 1 (Matt. 27:46 above);

The period of light and darkness of verse 2:

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45);

The contumely of verses 6-8, 12-13 (Matt. 27:39-43 above);

The casting lots of verse 18:

"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots" (Matt. 27:35),

all were literally fulfilled. When it is remembered that crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish, form of execution, the proof of inspiration is irresistible" (Scofield Reference Bible).

In verse 16 we hear Him saying: **"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet"** (Psalm 22:16).

Of course David could not have known that His Root and Offspring, the CHRIST of GOD, would be put to death by crucifixion; and even if he had known it, he could not have predicted the method of that crucifixion. Crucifixion was not always done the same way. Sometimes only the hands were pierced, leaving the feet to be tied to the Cross, and sometimes neither hands nor feet were pierced, and the victim was tied to the Cross by his hands and his feet, and left to die of exhaustion. But in this case the real writer of the Psalm, the HOLY SPIRIT of Truth, put it down minutely and circumstantially. So it was prophesied and so it was fulfilled!

Another striking fulfillment illustrating the minute accuracy of the Scriptures is found in the words of verse 18:

"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Psalm 22:18).

Now listen to the testimony of an eyewitness, as recorded in John 19:23-24:

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."

There were at least twenty-five just such accurate fulfillments of Scriptures in those last twenty-four hours preceding the death of the LORD JESUS, including the hours of the crucifixion. It is an irrefutable proof that the Scriptures are indeed the Word of GOD.

In verse 20 the Sufferer prays for one He calls His "**darling**." This, we cannot doubt, is a reference to the church which is His bride, for it was in her behalf that He was suffering there.

**"The church's one foundation
Is JESUS CHRIST her LORD;
She is His new creation
By SPIRIT and the Word:
From Heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."**

Messiah'S SONG OF TRIUMPH

A startling change takes place in the midst of verse 21:

"Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns"
(Psalm 22:21).

Down to that point the Psalm is filled with suffering and sorrow and agony. Only the minor chord is heard from the beginning of the Psalm until we come to the middle of verse 21; and then the minor chord gives place to the major chord. Just after saying, "**Save me from the lion's mouth,**" He cries in triumph, "**thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.**" And straight through to the end of the Psalm there is only joyous acclaim and triumphant shouting.

Why this sudden change? The answer is that at that point in the Psalm He yields up His spirit and passes out from the sufferings of the Cross, and in His freedom from that suffering He begins to sing. Listen to Him, reading through from verses 22 to verse 31 inclusive, and your own heart will sing as you hear Him singing.

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that

he hath done this" (Psalm 22:22-31).

In verse 22 we have language that is taken up in Hebrews 2:11 and 12 and it there identified as coming from the mouth of the Son of GOD:

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:11-12).

Think of Him "**in the midst of the church**" -- for, according to His own promise, wherever two or three are gathered in His name, He is in the midst -- think of Him leading in the singing of the church, and declaring unto His brethren GOD's new name as FATHER!

Remember His word to Mary Magdalene, the first person to whom He showed Himself alive after His resurrection. He said to her: "**Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren ['He is not ashamed to call them brethren'] and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God**" (John 20:17). How wonderful it is to be reminded by Him that GOD is now our FATHER, that we are now brethren in the family of GOD, with the risen and glorified Son of GOD at the head of that family!

Let us treasure the promise of verses 27 to 28 of our Psalm:

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations" (Psalm 22:27-28).

Now look again at verse 30:

Here we have the answer to the question raised in Isaiah 53:8: "**Who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken**"; therefore He left no family, no descendants, no offspring, no generation. But here in verse 30 we read: "**A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.**" That is, these whom He now greets as His brethren constitute the new family, the family of GOD.

"They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this" (Psalm 22:31). "Done" is the same thing as "finished." Thus the Psalm ends as it began, with a word from the Cross, the triumphant shout of our glorious LORD: "**It is finished!**"

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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